

Early intervention, transition and engagement – interventions to improve the Bolton student journey

Dr. Emily McIntosh

Student Experience Unit, Vice Chancellor's Office, University of Bolton.

Abstract

This poster will showcase details of an umbrella project at the University of Bolton, UK which involves designing and implementing a series of interventions to understand student transition and engagement, with a view to improving the student journey. The project is designed to improve student transition into Bolton by addressing issues around social integration, engagement, early intervention and assessment of needs and pinpointing the times of year when students experience difficulties. It is also concerned with improving the learner experience and the learning environment. Finally, the project will also seek to understand what factors cause students to withdraw from university. It aims to build upon existing research, both locally and nationally, on academic retention, to understand how we can apply transition pedagogy (Kift & Nelson, 2005) in our own context to build an early intervention model which ensures that students “at risk” of low attainment and attrition are able to access support at the earliest opportunity.

Introduction

This poster will showcase details of a longitudinal, umbrella project at the University of Bolton, UK which involves designing and implementing a series of interventions to understand student transition and engagement, with a view to improving the student journey.

Student experience interventions

The poster will showcase how current research with staff and students is being used to design and develop 6 specific interventions to improve the Bolton student experience: (1) the Bolton student journey mapping project, (2) the Get Ahead Summer School, (3) peer learning & participation: PASS & Peer Mentoring, (4) Personal & Enhanced Personal Tutoring, (5) redesigning of social learning spaces and (5) supporting students to develop grit and resilience.

Methods

Each intervention involves a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis. Staff and students are participating in questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative and quantitative will be assessed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Impact

The poster will stimulate discussion around the design and development of each intervention, how data from each project informs the delivery of an early-intervention model to provide support for students in transition and those most “at risk” of attrition and low attainment. Feedback from discussions about the poster will be incorporated into ongoing analysis.